



MERTON COLLEGE

PROPOSALS FOR SITE PR9, YARNTON

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Addendum - November 2022

CONCEPTUAL IMAGES TAKEN FROM THE SUBMITTED DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT, OCTOBER 2021



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1. SUMMARY

1.1 An outline planning application for Land to the West of Yarnton, also known as PR9 ('the Application Site'), was submitted by Merton College ('the Applicant') at the beginning of October 2021 and registered by Cherwell District Council ('CDC') under reference number 21/03522/OUT on 14th October 2021.

1.2 The description of development is as follows:

The erection of up to 540 dwellings (Class C3), up to 9,000sqm GEA of elderly/extra care residential floorspace (Class C2), a Community Home Work Hub (up to 200sqm) (Class E), alongside the creation of two locally equipped areas for play, one NEAP, up to 1.8 hectares of playing pitches and amenity space for the William Fletcher Primary School, two vehicular access points, green infrastructure, areas of public open space, community woodland, a local nature reserve, footpaths, tree planting, restoration of historic hedgerow, and associated works (the 'Application').

1.3 The Application Site was allocated by CDC as part of the Cherwell Local Plan (Part 1) Partial Review Oxford's Unmet Housing Need, adopted in September 2020. A programme of pre-application consultation was undertaken by PLMR between 21st September 2020 and 26th October 2020, on behalf of the Applicant, in advance of submitting the Application. It was focused on a website (www.pr9-consultation.co.uk) through which residents and other stakeholders could view the proposals and download plans.

1.4 In addition, a leaflet was distributed by 2nd Class post to 1,666 properties across both Yarnton and Begbroke. The consultation was also covered in the local media, including The Oxford Mail, which directed people to the website.

1.5 PLMR (on behalf of Merton College) also arranged a physical public exhibition (held on 21st and 22nd October 2020 in Yarnton Village Hall under Covid-19 distancing measures) inviting the same 1,666 properties to this. Direct pre-application discussions were also conducted with a range of interested local stakeholders, including Yarnton and Begbroke Parish Councils and local ward members.

1.6 Details of all the pre-application consultation activities are included in the Statement of Community Involvement ('SCI') submitted as part of the Application in October 2021. (Paragraphs 4.1 – 4.11 of the SCI)

1.7 The programme of engagement with the community and other key stakeholders has continued after the Application was submitted, and this Addendum to the SCI summarises the further engagement which has been undertaken from October 2021 to the end of September 2022.

1.8 The Applicant and its project team is committed to continuing such engagement until the Application is determined by CDC's Planning Committee.

2. Policy Requirements

2.1 Following submission, the applicant has remained mindful of local and national policies when engaging with stakeholders and the community. There are several planning policies and guidance at both local and national levels which stress the need for applicants to engage with local communities, the local authority and policy makers when bringing forward a planning application.

National Policy

2.2 The [NPPF \(National Planning Policy Framework\)](#), which originally came into force in March 2012, and was updated in July 2021, strengthens the need for front-loaded community engagement. The NPPF states:

“Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.

“Local planning authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. They cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application, but they should encourage take-up of any pre-application services they offer. They should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications.” (Paras 39 and 40, p.13)

2.3 The [Localism Act 2011](#) also emphasises the importance of pre-application engagement and encourages both local authorities and applicants to take these principles into account. Section 122 of the Localism Act 2011 sets out the requirement to undertake pre-application consultation as well as the need to take account of responses to consultation.

Local Policy

2.4 CDC's own [Statement of Community Involvement](#) ('CDC SCI') was adopted in July 2016. It sets out the way in which CDC will consult on planning proposals, as well as how it expects applicants to engage. The CDC SCI states:

“Developers of larger sites will generally be expected to engage with local communities – residents and community associations and relevant interest groups and statutory consultees or service providers. The Council will expect developers, as part of their application to detail the pre-application consultation they have undertaken (in a statement of consultation) and how comments have been addressed in progressing a proposal – which could take the form of a ‘Statement of Community Involvement.’ This will ensure that the standard requirements for involving the local and/or wider community are met.”¹

¹ Cherwell District Council Statement of Community Involvement, 2016, p39

2.5 In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, CDC published an addendum to its CDC SCI in July 2020. This advised how consultation should take place in response to the need to maintain social distancing. It encouraged the use of online facilities and virtual meeting systems to ensure that meaningful engagement and consultation continue to take place despite the problems caused by Covid-19.²

3. Post-Submission Engagement

3.1 Through the pre-application consultation process, the Applicant and its project team have established good relationships with many stakeholders and have undertaken to keep them informed as the Application progresses. On behalf of the Applicant, the project team identified those stakeholders who took part in the pre-application consultation where continued dialogue was felt to be appropriate. Stakeholders were generally included if they held an elected role and therefore represented some or all of the Application Site.

- Yarnton Parish Council
- Begbroke Parish Council
- Cllr Maurice Billington – Ward Councillor, Kidlington East
- Cllr Carmen Griffiths – Ward Councillor, Kidlington East
- Cllr Ian Middleton – Ward Councillor, Kidlington East
- Cllr Conrad Copeland – Ward Councillor, Kidlington West
- Cllr Katherine Tyson – Ward Councillor, Kidlington West
- Layla Moran MP

3.2 This list does not include statutory consultees, nor relevant departments within Cherwell District Council or Oxfordshire County Council. Dialogue with these groups was undertaken separately by other members of the project team.

3.3 Following the pre-application consultation, PLMR maintained the project website at www.pr9-consultation.co.uk where residents could view the proposals and download detailed plans. Contact information was also included so that residents could get in touch with the project team directly.

3.4 In addition, the Applicant and its project team has committed to an extensive programme of meetings with key stakeholders, including regular attendance at meetings of both Yarnton and Begbroke Parish Councils to keep residents updated with the progress of the Application. John Gloag, Merton College's Estates Bursar, wrote to all stakeholders in January 2022 setting out the proposed approach. His letter is reproduced at Appendix 1.

3.5 He also proposed three working groups, focused on issues of local concern:

- Transport and highways
- Flooding and drainage
- Design and stewardship

² Cherwell Statement of Community Involvement Addendum, p3

3.6 These topics were identified following the detailed feedback received from both Parish Councils, who identified them as important topics for residents. These meetings are ongoing and have been led by discipline specialists from the project team and are being attended by co-opted individuals from each Parish Council, as well as Yarnton Flood Defence Group.

Activity Schedule

3.7 Following the submission of the Application, the following additional stakeholder engagement activity was undertaken. This includes the working groups referred to above, as well as other meetings.

Table 1: Schedule of engagement work undertaken following submission of the Application

Activity	Date	Organisations Involved
Notification of Application submission to all stakeholders	15 th October 2021	PLMR/PR9 All identified stakeholders
Meeting with CDC/OCC regarding s106 Heads of Terms and Delivery	28 th October 2021	Vectos (for Merton College) Touchstone P&D (for Merton College) Gerald Eve (for Merton College) Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council
Meeting with OCC/CDC on transport matters	10 th November 2021	Vectos (for Merton College) Touchstone P&D (for Merton College) Gerald Eve (for Merton College) Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council
Meeting with CDC/OCC regarding s106 Heads of Terms and Delivery	26 th November 2021	Vectos (for Merton College) Touchstone P&D (for Merton College) Gerald Eve (for Merton College) EFM (for Merton College) Merton College Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council
Meeting to discuss PR Sites Trip Methodology	10 th December 2021	Vectos (for Merton College) IMA (for Site PR8)

Activity	Date	Organisations Involved
		i-Transport (for Site PR6a) KMC (for Site PR6b) Oxfordshire County Council
Meeting with Yarnton Flood Defence Group	20 th December 2021	PJA (for Merton College) Members of Yarnton Flood Defence Group
Meeting with CDC/OCC regarding s106 Heads of Terms and Delivery	23 rd December 2021	Vectos (for Merton College) Touchstone P&D (for Merton College) Gerald Eve (for Merton College) Vectos (for Merton College) Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council
Meeting with CDC/OCC on transport matters	10 th January 2022	Vectos (for Merton College) Touchstone P&D (for Merton College) Gerald Eve (for Merton College) Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council
Letter to Yarnton and Begbroke Parish Councils setting out proposed engagement schedule	18 th January 2022	Merton College All identified stakeholders
Meeting with CDC/OCC regarding s106 Heads of Terms and Delivery	27 th January 2022	Vectos (for Merton College) Touchstone P&D (for Merton College) Gerald Eve (for Merton College) EFM (for Merton College) Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council
Meeting with CDC/OCC on transport matters	7 th February 2022	Vectos (for Merton College) Touchstone P&D (for Merton College) Gerald Eve (for Merton College) Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council

Activity	Date	Organisations Involved
Meeting with CDC/OCC regarding s106 Heads of Terms and Delivery	24 th February 2022	Vectos (for Merton College) Touchstone P&D (for Merton College) Gerald Eve (for Merton College) EFM (for Merton College) PJA (for Merton College) Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council
Meeting with Yarnton Parish Council	7 th March 2022	PLMR (for Merton College) Parish Councillors
Meeting with Begbroke Parish Council	11 th March 2022	PLMR (for Merton College) Parish Councillors
Meeting to discuss PR sites modelling	17 th March 2022	Vectos (for Merton College) IMA (for Site PR8) i-Transport (for Site PR6a) KMC (for Site PR6b) Glanville (for Site PR8) Oxfordshire County Council
Meeting with CDC/OCC regarding s106 Heads of Terms and Delivery	24 th March 2022	Vectos (for Merton College) Touchstone P&D (for Merton College) Gerald Eve (for Merton College) EFM (for Merton College) PJA (for Merton College) Merton College Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council
Meeting with CDC/OCC regarding s106 Heads of Terms and Delivery	28 th April 2022	Vectos (for Merton College) Touchstone P&D (for Merton College) Gerald Eve (for Merton College) Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council

Activity	Date	Organisations Involved
Meeting with Yarnton Flood Defence Group	17 th May 2022	PJA (for Merton College) Members of Yarnton Flood Defence Group
Meeting with CDC/OCC regarding s106 Heads of Terms and Delivery	26 th May 2022	Vectos (for Merton College) Touchstone P&D (for Merton College) Gerald Eve (for Merton College) Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council
Meeting of Design & Stewardship Working Group	21 st June 2022	Define (for Merton College) Touchstone P&D (for Merton College) Gerald Eve (for Merton College) PLMR (for Merton College) Members of Yarnton Parish Council Members of Begbroke Parish Council
Meeting with CDC/OCC regarding s106 Heads of Terms and Delivery	30 th June 2022	Vectos (for Merton College) Touchstone P&D (for Merton College) Gerald Eve (for Merton College) Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council
Meeting with Yarnton Parish Council	4 th July 2022	PLMR (for Merton College) Members of Yarnton Parish Council
Meeting with Begbroke Parish Council	5 th July 2022	PLMR (for Merton College) Member of Yarnton Parish Council
Meeting of Transport & Highways Working Group	22 nd July 2022	Vectos (for Merton College) Members of Yarnton Parish Council Members of Begbroke Parish Council
Meeting with CDC/OCC regarding s106 Heads of Terms and Delivery	28 th July 2022	Vectos (for Merton College) Touchstone P&D (for Merton College) Gerald Eve (for Merton College) Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council

Activity	Date	Organisations Involved
Meeting with CDC/OCC regarding s106 Heads of Terms and Delivery	25 th August 2022	Vectos (for Merton College) Touchstone P&D (for Merton College) Gerald Eve (for Merton College) Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council
Meeting of Yarnton Parish Council	5 th September 2022	PLMR (for Merton College) Members of Yarnton Parish Council
Meeting of Yarnton Flood Defence Group	15 th September 2022	PJA (for Merton College) Members of Yarnton Flood Defence Group
Meeting with CDC/OCC regarding s106 Heads of Terms and Delivery	22 nd September 2022	Vectos (for Merton College) Touchstone P&D (for Merton College) Gerald Eve (for Merton College) Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council
Meeting with CDC/OCC regarding s106 Heads of Terms and Delivery	27 th October 2022	Vectos (for Merton College) Touchstone P&D (for Merton College) Gerald Eve (for Merton College) Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council

4. Feedback and Ongoing Engagement

4.1 Following regular meetings with both Yarnton and Begbroke Parish Councils and the assigned working groups, further detailed feedback has been collected. This includes across highways, drainage, and design & stewardship. This is summarised below.

- **Flooding and drainage:** Residents remain concerned about surface and waste water and associated flood risk. This is an ongoing challenge which residents felt could be exacerbated by the proposed development. Residents have undertaken detailed studies, and these have been shared with the project team for further review. It is also recognised that this is a wider issue involving multiple agencies, so there is unlikely to be a solution which is solely in the gift of PR9 to deliver.
- **Highways and Transport:** There remains ongoing concern at the impact on local traffic, particularly along Rutten Lane and the A44 – which residents feel can be congested at peak times. There is support for lowering the speed limit along the A44. However, not all the issues raised are in the control of the Application.
- **Design and Stewardship:** There is a general feeling that the quality of play areas and other community spaces are of poor quality and overall investment in community spaces would be welcomed. There remains a keenness to understand the long-term stewardship arrangements for the community land and how the local community can both get involved and benefit.

4.2 Members of the project team have undertaken to listen to these concerns and work to support solutions through their discussions with relevant statutory authorities, including Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.

4.3 The feedback summarised here is not exhaustive and is merely a summary of several detailed conversations which have taken place both verbally and in writing since the Application was submitted, with a large amount of technical information also shared with the Applicant for review.

4.4 Furthermore, the Applicant and its project team have committed to continue to attend future Parish Council meetings, as relevant, to keep residents updated on the progress of the Application.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The Applicant and its project team have continued to engage and consult with key stakeholders following submission of the Application in October 2021. The key issues and concerns have not materially changed since the pre-application consultation undertaken in 2020/21 and the project team continue to respond to them in developing the proposals.

5.2 However, significant further detail has been shared with stakeholders by the project team through this process – particularly on drainage and highways issues – and this continues to be reviewed and will be utilised where appropriate.

5.3 The engagement summarised here does not include reference to ongoing discussions with relevant statutory bodies, although these have been referenced in the activity schedule. This has been carried out by relevant technical specialists within the team and the results of these discussions are detailed elsewhere in the addendum documents. The local authority has also carried out its own statutory consultation process on the Application.

5.4 The Applicant and its project team will continue to engage with the community and other key stakeholders where appropriate and necessary, including attendance at relevant parish council meetings.

Appendix 1

Letter to Yarnton and Begbroke Parish Councils, 18th January 2022

John S G Gloag MRICS
COLLEGE LAND AGENT & ESTATES BURSAR



18th January 2022

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

RE: PR9 – PLANNING APPLICATION AND ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

As you know, Merton College has now submitted a planning application for site PR9 which is allocated in the Cherwell District Council Local Plan. We have also received a copy of your comments in respect of the planning application, which we have carefully reviewed.

Merton College is a long-term steward of land and as the application progresses with the local authority, we wish to ensure that Yarnton and Begbroke Parish Councils are fully engaged in the process. This should include regular engagement with Merton College and the project team.

To this end, we would like to propose the following engagement programme to you, which we hope will facilitate a regular and open dialogue on the issues and opportunities surrounding the PR9 proposals, including those you have raised through your comments. This will include:

- A representative from the PR9 project team will be available to attend all parish council meetings. As required at meetings, they will be able to offer a high-level update to councillors and take away notes and questions which require a response. This individual will be the principal point of contact for both parish councils.
- Relevant members of the project team with specific expertise will meet to discuss specific topics with smaller groups or individuals on the Parish Council as required. We anticipate these would be joint sessions with representatives from both Yarnton and Begbroke Parish Councils.
- Meeting schedules, agendas, and frequency can be decided by the relevant working group. Based on the comments you have made to Cherwell District Council, we propose these focus on the following areas: Transport, Drainage, Design & Stewardship.
- We would also like to begin discussions around the future management and stewardship of the community land, including understanding potential nominations for membership of the community board.

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John S G Gloag MRICS
COLLEGE LAND AGENT & ESTATES BURSAR



We trust that this proposed approach will allow us to work closely together over the coming months to maximise the benefits of the proposals to the local area. I hope you agree that a structured approach will ensure this can be achieved in a consistent and well-defined way so that all parties can benefit.

If you have any questions on our proposal, or would like to discuss this in more detail, please don't hesitate to contact me at estates@merton.ox.ac.uk. Provided you are happy, we would like to commence this arrangement as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

J S G Gloag MRICS

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